DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2026, AGRAHAYAN 1, 1433 BS

SPORT



"I believe that everyone in that side knew what was going on. It (sandpaper) was used in two Tests and there was discussions in the change rooms of how we were going to get the ball to reverse.

Retired Australia pacer **CHADD SAYERS**

'Angry' Jamal questions Bangladesh's gameplan

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamal Bhuiyan on Sunday criticised head coach Thomas Dooley's gameplan against Pakistan following Bangladesh's heartbreaking 1-0 defeat in the SAFF Championship semifinal, which ended their hopes of reaching the final.

"We already knew that Pakistan would play with five defenders. Actually, when a team plays with five defenders, normally we get some solutions, but yesterday [on Saturday] I didn't hear any solution. So, this was a bit disappointing," Jamal told reporters at the team hotel on Sunday when asked whether Pakistan had sprung any tactical surprises.

The former captain was also unhappy with being brought on in stoppage time.

"Everyone in the team was tired, so I thought I would come on earlier. Even then, the three of us together, I mean, we were called at the 86th minute, but... We came on at ninety plus two minutes. So, I talked a lot about this after the match because I was angry. I think that was not up to the mark, but it's life. End of the day we lost and couldn't play in the final," Jamal said.

He was also critical of Dooley's decision to keep key players, including Hamza Choudhury and Shamit Shome, on the pitch for much of the group-stage match against Sri Lanka instead of giving them a rest ahead of the crucial semifinal against Pakistan.

"I agree with this. Because when the last match was two-nil, at that time I think those who are important players, everyone is important, but players like Hamza needed rest. Because after two days, I mean after 48 hours there is a game, there was



another game. So, there were some mistakes there, but not only the players have to learn, the management also has to learn about this. So, but end of the day, it's the coach's decision who will play and who will not play," Jamal said.

He added: "After the match, coach talked to everyone in the dressing room. So, he gave a lot of points, but really what's the use?"

The former captain said he had barely slept since the defeat and spent much of the night with new captain Hamza at the team hotel.

"I am feeling very bad, couldn't sleep all night. I was in Hamza's room until 6:00 am. So, I am feeling very bad because actually we couldn't play like the previous match, the reason for this is maybe lack of tactical," Jamal said.

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS, EUROSPORT
South Africa vs Bangladesh
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 2:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
UEFA Nations League
Germany vs Netherlands
Switzerland vs Scotland
Live from 1:45 am (Tuesday)



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(L) Kagiso Rabada wreaked havoc after Bangladesh elected to bat on the opening day of the first Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday, reducing the visitors to 22 for three before striking twice more to leave them reeling at 121 for five. However, a record 206-run partnership between Tawhid Hridoy (137) and Litton Das (92 not out) put Bangladesh in a strong position at stumps, with the score at 327 for six. PHOTO: **AFP/CSA**

Hridoy's discipline ensures dream day

SPORTS REPORTER

Towhid Hridoy hardly put a foot wrong after his two dismissals in the Mirpur Test, and yesterday he demonstrated his growing mental strength by pacing his innings masterfully to score his second Test century. He became only the second Bangladesh batter after Mahmudul Hasan Joy to score a hundred in South Africa.

After a shaky start to his Test career, Hridoy has found his footing, and his latest effort helped Bangladesh enjoy a memorable day at the Wanderers.

It was a brave decision by skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto to bat first on a greenish Wanderers surface. Kagiso Rabada quickly raised questions over that call, reducing Bangladesh to 22 for three in just the ninth over. But Hridoy once again showed that he could grind out an innings under pressure.

With the new ball and challenging surfaces making life difficult for top-order batters, Test cricket increasingly demands a balance between defence and counter-attack. Hridoy and Litton Das followed that template, justifying Shanto's decision to bat first and take the game to the Proteas.

While visiting teams often prefer to bowl first on the grassy Wanderers track, Bangladesh backed their batting.

Hridoy had come under scrutiny following his two dismissals in Mirpur, but his subsequent performances suggested a growing ability to value his wicket and absorb pressure. Scores of 242 not out and 82 in Sylhet reflected his concentration, while the pace and bounce at the Wanderers presented a different challenge. He adjusted by frequently moving across the crease to counter the movement, a method that worked until he fell to Marco Jansen off the final delivery of the day for 137. It was the joint-highest individual score by a Bangladesh batter in South Africa, alongside Joy.

Bangladesh's early collapse had put them under severe pressure. Mahfijul Islam Robin fell for a first-ball duck, while Mominul Haque edged Rabada after hanging his bat outside off. With the visitors reeling at 22 for three, Hridoy held one end together as Tanzid Tamim played more aggressively. Their 99-run partnership helped Bangladesh see off the new ball, but Rabada returned in the second session to strike twice in successive deliveries, including the wicket of Tanzid (67).

The arrival of Litton changed the tempo. He played the older ball with authority, initially helping consolidate before taking the attack to the bowlers. Hridoy, meanwhile, remained patient, negotiated the extra bounce and continued to build his innings.

Talking to broadcasters prior to the start of the game, head coach Phil Simmons highlighted the need for Hridoy to move on from his remarkable 350 not out for Bangladesh A in Potchefstroom and focus on the demands of the Test series.

"Yeah, it was a special innings and he [Hridoy] has to now come down from that. All the other batsmen, they've been working hard the last two days on trying to get the adjustment they need when we come here now. And hopefully, they've, you know, been comfortable enough to play the innings that we need from them," Simmons said.

Hridoy responded with an innings built on discipline, while Litton looked increasingly comfortable playing his shots. Their 206-run stand, Bangladesh's highest partnership against South Africa in Tests, surpassed the previous record of 138 set by Jaker Ali and Mehidy Hasan Miraz for the seventh wicket.

Coming together at 121 for five, the pair carried Bangladesh to 327 for six at stumps, their highest total against South Africa. Litton remained unbeaten on 92, just eight runs short of a century.

"The discipline with which he batted, leaving the ball, gave me more confidence. We wanted to bat long," Litton said at the end of the day's play, summing up a memorable effort from the pair.

Mosaddek hits record double ton in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Mosaddek Hossain registered the record for the most number of double centuries by a Bangladesh batter in first-class cricket, hammering a 215-ball 220 for Mymensingh against Rajshahi yesterday.

Resuming on 137 at the Sylhet Academy Ground on Day 2 of the National Cricket League's seventh and final round, he notched his fourth first-class double ton.

It was his first double century in a decade following two in 2014-15 and one in 2015-16. He dominated a 218-run eighth-wicket stand with Ariful Jony (an unbeaten 163-ball 53). Following Ariful's Day 1 resistance, Mosaddek took charge, smashing 170 of those partnership runs off just 152 balls. Laced with 22 fours and 10 sixes, his explosive innings propelled Mymensingh to declare at 440 for 9. In response, Rajshahi



reached 178 for 3 at Stumps, anchored by Habibur Rahman, who narrowly missed a ton with a 101-ball 93.

At Khulna Divisional Stadium, Sylhet dominated Barishal. Pacer Abu Jayed Rahi's fifer bowled Barishal out for 228, despite Fazle Rabbi's 79. Overcoming two early wickets, Sylhet reached 239 for 4 -- an 11-run lead -- fueled by a 129-run fourth-wicket stand between Mubin Ahmed Dishan (75) and Amite Hasan, who fell late after his 13th first-class century (101).

At Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Dhaka resisted title-contenders Chattogram. Ashikur Rahman Shibli hit his fifth first-class ton -- a 190-ball 105 -- before falling in the final hour. Dhaka closed at 282 for 7, trailing by just six runs.

At Sylhet International Stadium, Nurul Hasan Sohan's unbeaten 94 kept table-toppers Khulna afloat. Replying to Rangpur's 338, Khulna reached 276 for 7 at Stumps, with Rangpur's Tasfir Arafat claiming 4 for 65.





Portugal players line up with young mascots during the national anthems, wearing the number seven shirt as a tribute to Cristiano Ronaldo, before their UEFA Nations League match against Denmark at the Estadio Municipal de Braga in Braga on Saturday. (Inset) The players look dejected after Denmark handed Portugal a 4-1 defeat in their first match since Ronaldo's retirement from international football. PHOTO: **REUTERS/AFP**

Chasing success without building the foundation

ANSIUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's 1-0 defeat to Pakistan in the SAFF Championship semifinal on Saturday has once again exposed the need for a stronger domestic football structure and a proper youth development system. While a regional title remains elusive for more than two decades, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) appears to be chasing short-term success without addressing the foundations needed to achieve it.

Since Kazi Salahuddin took charge of the federation in 2008, the focus has largely remained on the top-tier league and the national team. Facilities for the senior side improved through better training and accommodation, overseas preparations, FIFA friendlies and foreign coaches. However, little was done to build a sustainable youth pipeline or ensure that professional clubs invested seriously in young players. Youth development often remained on paper, with little pressure on clubs to establish effective programmes.

The approach has largely continued under the current executive committee led by Tabith Awal. The inclusion of overseas-based players such as Hamza Choudhury, Shamit Shome, Farhaan Ali Wahid, Zidane Yousuf and Zayyan Ahmed has added depth and generated enthusiasm among football followers, but has yet to translate into regional dominance. Pakistan and Sri Lanka are also recruiting overseas-based players of origin in pursuit of quick success, while India have reached the Asian Cup finals twice in the last three editions and retained their regional supremacy largely with home-grown players.

Bangladesh's three successive SAFF final appearances between 1999 and 2005, including the 2003 title, were built on a generation of



PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

experienced, technically sound footballers developed through a competitive Dhaka Football League. The professional league has failed to produce a comparable pipeline. Players with only five to eight top-flight appearances have received national call-ups, reflecting the shortage of quality options.

There is nothing wrong with bringing in overseas recruits, particularly if they can complement home-grown players. But they need to be integrated into a team capable of understanding and executing a common game plan, with the necessary pace, positional awareness and decision-making. Hamza has often had to instruct teammates about their positioning on the pitch, underlining the gap in tactical awareness. The BFF must therefore give greater priority to youth development, whether through its Elite Academy or club-level programmes, and make regular investment in young players a requirement for professional clubs.

After Saturday's defeat, head coach Thomas Dooley said: "Everything was taking too long, it was too slow. I said we needed to play much faster out of the back like we did last time, but we kept the ball and waited."

He also explained how Pakistan anticipated Bangladesh's passes: "They knew what we wanted to do and where we wanted to play the ball, and they did what I always call forward thinking. They anticipated where the ball was going and started moving before we played it. That's why they intercepted so many passes."

Bangladesh may improve its chances of winning the SAFF title by recruiting more players of Bangladeshi origin. But competing beyond South Asia will require technically sound, tactically aware home-grown footballers. There is no shortcut to building that foundation.